

When It's Dark, Look to the Stars

by leglesslegolass

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Summary: Thea Wren can't remember who she was before the age of 10. For years she's grown up under the tutelage of thieves and criminals, but when she is betrayed and taken into custody by one Lieutenant of the Interstellar Federation, James Hawkins, the two are propelled into something that is much bigger than either of them could have anticipated.

1. Chapter 1

Hello, everyone! Forewarning, I've never written a fanfic before, but I can assure you that I am an avid reader, so I'd like to think I know what I'm doing.

This story came about on a whim and I thought I'd start it instead of studying for my Ecology test tomorrow (procrastinators rule!).

Please review and let me know how it is!

* * *

><p>When It's Dark, Look to the Stars

"Come on Spratt, you know I'm good for my word. I delivered last month didn't I? And for the love of the Galaxy, it was the whole shipment wasn't it? I bet it fetched you twice as much as what any of your other thugs brought you."

Thea eyed the lanky man from across their dented wooden table. He had arranged for them to meet here. It was a public place where uncooperative outbursts were more likely to be noticed by loitering police officials, but just shady enough were passersby were less inclined to ask questions, weary of what would happen if they did.

Thelonious Spratt, crime lord and black market dealer, sat across from her, his long spindly fingers tapping methodically on the surface of the table. Every time one of his claw-like nails struck the wood she suppressed a habitual tick, the gesture eating at her already fraying patience.

"It was not the target I told you to acquire." His monotone voice was forever stuck at a level of inflection. It portrayed disinterest with just a hint of chastisement that made her feel like a child deserving of a slap on the hand.

"The target you so kindly told me to 'acquire'", she mocked, "was unobtainable and you know that. I wasn't about to risk my neck for something I knew I wasn't gonna be able to get. I promised I'd bring you something, and I did. What was so wrong with my delivery?"

Thea crossed her arms as she looked at him, trying to be as menacing as possible so he wouldn't be able to sense her fear as much as she could.

This last delivery had been an utter disaster, but she wasn't about to admit that to him. It took real nerve to admit it to herself and she wasn't about to confess her stupidity to her conniving employer no matter how much she depended on the errands he sent her on.

She had been in his employ for over ten years now. She'd been a stowaway on one of his trading vessels. This one had been carrying a shipment of silks and furs (the illegal kind) from one planet to the next. How a starving ten-year-old had managed to get past armed guards and on to a ship that belonged to the most notorious of crime lords North of the Cignas Cross? She can't recall.

Even though she couldn't remember the circumstances of her arrival on the ship, she remembered feeling completely terrified as she had found herself in his quarters, interrupting a business transaction (also of the illegal kind) with a very important client. A woman standing near Spratt had pulled out a blaster with complete ease as if she was accustomed to aiming it at scared children. Thea remembers how her body had started to convulse with an upheaval of tears and pure fear. She can recall the metal ting of the hammer clicking before it was followed by a curt and commanding, 'Wait'.

Spratt had spared her life all those years ago and here she was, his trained dog that was forever at his beck and call. Others under his employ or within his ring referred to her as "the Heir", a title she both deserved and despised. Spratt had taken her under his dark wings and taught her everything he knew about all things distasteful. She knew how to swindle a con artist and steal from thieves. She knew how to destroy a man's life and how to kill.

Thea hated what he had shaped her into. Whoever she had been before she met him, that person was long gone and even if she did know her true identity, there would be no way of going back to it now. Her aliases were wanted on three different planets in the Galaxy and it was getting hard for her to even show her face here on her home planet of Mosli. She tried to convince herself that she didn't care, but when children saw her and ran the opposite direction, she could feel the remains of her humanity slowly slip away piece by piece.

And it was all because of this man who sat before her, tapping his manicured claws incessantly on the table top. She stared into his eyes, daring to hold his gaze until he responded to her. But he didn't, instead his tiger-eyes flickered around the room, a gesture she was very familiar with, one that signaled something was about to happen. Even though she lacked his heightened senses, she felt it too. The atmosphere of the dive began to quiet down. Clinking glasses froze in midair and raucous laughter ended uneasily.

The two burly men to Spratt's left and right went rigid and their grips found their hidden blasters within their jackets.

"Thea."

Spratt saying her name pulled her attention away from the silence of the room.

"What?" She hissed between her teeth.

He stood up then and adjusted his velvet suit, flicking away an imaginary fleck of debris. "I had great hopes for you and I have to say I am sorely disappointed with how you've repaid my hospitality."

Thea eyed him, momentarily confused by his confession and reprimand, but then she understood and sprung up from her seat. "Why you black-hearted, manipulative â€""

Before she could finish, the closed door to the bar was kicked inward, men in white and blue uniforms stormed in. Those who had proper sense rushed to get out of their way and stowed away their knives and other illegal weapons. Thea just stood there in the middle of the room, as her whole world, her cruel and wicked world, crumbled to pieces around her. She was in a daze. The man who had practically raised her, had saved her life, the man who she hated, yet was the closest thing she had to family, had betrayed her and turned her into the Interstellar Alliance. In a matter of seconds officers had flanked her and grabbed her arms, pinning them behind her back.

"That was a little, um, anticlimactic?" One of them muttered.

Thea was too shocked to put up a fight and at this point, with officers blocking her every exit, there was no logic in trying to escape now that her shock was wearing off.

An officer scoffed as he readjusted his grip on her wrist, "You're telling me. Whose idea was it to bring 15 officers?"

"The Lieutenant's going to be disappointed. I overheard him talking to the Captain. He said he was looking forward to a little tussle between the two of them."

"A tussle?" One jeered. "Who the hell says tussle anymore?"

"I do. It's a valid word in this situation."

"You're such a cretin."

"Cretin? Who says cretin?"

"Shut up." Thea seethed.

"Keep your mouth shut. You're under arrest."

"Obviously." She said, condescending.

One of them twisted the skin on her wrist in opposite directions, bringing tears to her eyes.

"You're gonna have to try harder than that."

Before the officer could take her up on her offer, a clear voice rang through the room, a voice that demanded attention and was given it.

"At attention." The resounding echo of boots stomping together reverberated through the room. Thea's green eyes snapped up to see a man standing in the doorway. His features were drowned by the light flooding in, but his posture branded him as a commanding officer; assertive and demanding of respect.

As he walked further into the room his features became more clear. Thea thought he couldn't be much older than her. She didn't know if it was the way he walked with a slight bounce in his step or the way the angles of his face hadn't completely hardened, but he was young, she could tell.

He stopped right in front of her, his green-blue eyes searching her face, almost as if he were studying her.

"Thea Wren?" He addressed her by her real name. Spratt. That bastard. She thought.

"Yeah?" She looked straight at him, unyielding.

"Lieutenant James Hawkins." He said matter-of-factly. "I don't take kindly to those who steal from me."

2. Chapter 2

What a pompous prick. She thinks.

"Well, I'm Thea and I don't take kindly to those who accuse me of something I did or didn't do." She tries to struggle again against the officers' grasps. "You know this is all so very annoying. What do you say to letting me go and doing this some other day, hmm?"

Lieutenant Hawkins leans in close to her face and gives her a smug smile, "This an inconvenience for you?"

"As a matter of fact," she forcefully yanks one of her arms free, "it is!"

She can hear the shocked inhale of a breath from one of the guards just seconds before she lands a punch on the side of the Lieutenant's pretty face.

It's as if it happens in slow motion. Her knuckles collide with his cheekbone enough for his head to whip slowly to the side. She watches his green-blue eyes close as if he were more annoyed by her left hook than in pain by it. He makes an effort to turn his head back towards her deliberately. Thea only has eyes for him, but she can imagine the look on everyone else's faces in the room â€“ looks that show their uneasiness and personify their frozen silence. Assaulting a ranking officer of the Interstellar Federation is a prosecutable offense.

Lieutenant Hawkins rubs a hand against his already reddening cheek.

"That's a nice shiner you'll have their, Lieutenant." She mocks his title blatantly, having had no respect for the Federation or its rules before, and this encounter surely not making her opinions of them any greater. The guard whom she had freed an arm from a minute before grabs her again, this time with no sense of gentleness. He and his partner then decide to secure her wrists with manacles, Federation grade that shocks the victim when stretched. They should've done it earlier. People always underestimate her.

Not that she thinks anything beyond hate for this 'Lieutenant James Hawkins', but she does give him credit for not responding to her punch or her insults. Usually at this point, the captor slams her in the gut, or slaps her across the face, or has someone else do the dirty work for them. This boy doesn't even attempt to make a jab at her. She's impressed, if only slightly, but little does she know that his temper is reddening just like the bruise on his face. He knows though that if he mirrored her actions the situation would only get more out-of-hand, and he really, really doesn't want that. So instead all he does is flash a smirk at her.

"Something to remember you by then when you're in prison." He retorts, the only defense he can give himself.

Thea watches him as he then looks around at the patrons of the bar, noticing for the first time the lowly scum of Mosli that frequents this dump. They're dressed in clothes they've been wearing for weeks. Their hair is greasy and their hats are covered in stains. Everyone looks sallow and harsh. These are people that men like these officers rarely give a second glance, but the Lieutenant doesn't look at them with contempt like she'd thought he would. He simply looks at them as if they were of the same caliber as those of whose galas and balls he must attend. She scoffs at his presumed air of equality that secretly reeks of superiority.

You're not fooling anyone, Lieutenant.

With her wrists now firmly encircled in platinum and electron reinforced restraints, she knows she definitely isn't going anywhere but a penitentiary made of stone, steel, and severity, so she may as well try and delay her ultimate journey before what could possibly be a lifelong sentence. And she always did like to have a bit of fun.

"So, tell me, my good Lieutenant, what precious thing did I steal from you? Did I hijack something you were guarding or was this something more personal? I have to say I've been known to do both."

Thea smiles at him toxically, packing all her condescending hatred into a sugary sweet sneer.

He notices her terrible smile but doesn't see the harm in telling her what she had done, so he indulges her. "You managed to steal twenty barrels of helium-4 from a ship I was charged to see safely off towards the Coral Galaxy two mornings ago. I assume it's being put to better use somewhere else?"

"Oh, I was never told the purposes for my services. As long as I was paid, I didn't feel the need to ask questions."

Thea could see this bothered him. It went against everything he must believe in. Honor. Justice. Honesty. Bravery. Loyalty. It made her want to gag. None of those things had ever brought her any good.

"Twenty barrels of helium-4 you say? That's pretty impressive. How ever did I manage to sneak those out from under your handsome nose?" She makes a quick step forward and takes a playful nip at his nose. She sees his light eyes go dark, his resolve completely disintegrating.

He lunges forward, ready to do anything to shut her up when a commanding voice stops him.

"At ease, Lieutenant Hawkins."

He is inches away from her face as he hears the resonating voice of his Captain slice through the heated air between him and Thea. Composing himself, he backs away, readjusting his uniform (a nervous habit in front of his superior officer) and turns around.

"Captain Neyo." He salutes him. The Captain nods at his lieutenant fighting the small smile that creeps onto his face as he sees the lad visibly relax. Jim reminds the Captain much of himself when he was that age. Ambitious and eager to prove his worth, yet unbelievably tense at the thought of screwing it all up at a moment's notice.

Looking around Lieutenant Hawkins he notices a girl, well more of a woman, being held captive by Officers Geenam and Hoth. He steps towards her, Jim obligingly moving out of his way.

Thea makes no effort to conceal her sardonic look. This Captain looks even more ridiculous than the Lieutenant. His white and red uniform is dripping in medals and pendants and there is a gold sash that runs from his right shoulder down to his left hip, the great color signifying his high rank.

With his hands clasped behind his back, the captain eyes her much like his lieutenant did, studying her in a way that makes her feel more like she's a monster from one of those Galactic Zoos than a 21-year-old girl.

"I'd salute, Captain, but as you see, your Lieutenant has so kindly restrained me. My deepest apologies." She bows low.

Without missing a beat, he responds cordially, "None taken, my lady."

This time it's Thea who looks at him like he's an alien in a zoo and she bursts out laughing, taking her guards off-guard, so to speak.

"Oh my stars, Captain! You are funny!" She straightens after the laughing spell and steps closer to him quickly, her countenance immediately hardening, "But I assure you, I am no lady."

"Captain, this is the thief who smuggled the barrels off the RLS Andromeda." Lieutenant Hawkins reports and Captain Neyo simply nods, keeping his eyes on Thea, unintimidated by neither her threat nor the following glare.

How could someone so young look so hard? The severity of her stare and the dullness of her young eyes give nothing and everything away all at once; Loss, and loneliness. Anger and sadness. An overwhelming instinct that screams, 'fight!'.

"What is it with you Federation lot?" Thea blusters. "I'm not some animal to be gawked at!" She presses up against the captain, despite both Officers Geenam and Hoth holding tight, until she's right in his face.

"Get your nose out of my business and I promise to stay out of yours, or I swear you'll get it." Then she spits at him and her saliva splats on his cleanly shaven cheek.

"Oi!" Either Geenam or Hoth yells and she's kicked in the back of the knees and her legs buckle underneath her as she slams down onto the dirty floor.

Pain shoots through her legs up to her neck, her body completely jarred by the impact. She knows she shouldn't have done it, but what is there to lose anymore?

Captain Neyo isn't disgusted, nor is he angry. He's fascinated by this Thea Wren. A girl with a red-hot temper and the unfortunate knack for spitting on people's faces and stealing their precious cargo. Then he gets an idea.

"Lieutenant Hawkins." He says.

"Yes, Captain?" Jim answers instantly.

He wipes the spit of his cheek with a handkerchief from his coat pocket.

"Have Thea Wren cleaned and dressed and brought to my office in precisely one hour. I have a proposition I'd like her to hear."

"Yes, Cap- wait, excuse me, sir?"

Turning away from the girl still on her knees and his baffled lieutenant, Captain Neyo repeats, "One hour, Lieutenant Hawkins." And then he's out the door.

End

file.